

Appln. No.: 09/928,292
Amendment Dated: March 26, 2007
Reply to Office Action dated January 29, 2007

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Previous Presented) A method for tracking a special service delivery by a carrier of a mail item created by an office worker, the method comprising the steps of:

applying a special service indicator to the mail item during creation of the mail item;

sending the mail item to a mail room for final processing prior to submitting the mail item to the carrier for the special service delivery;

automatically detecting at the mail room the special service indicator on the mail item and determining the special service delivery required based on the detection of the special service indicator;

applying at the mail room a unique office worker generated identifier to the mail item, the unique identifier including an electronic address of a company server;

submitting the mail item with the unique identifier thereon to the carrier for the special service delivery;

receiving from the carrier at the electronic address obtained by the carrier from the unique identifier on the mail item information relating to the location of the mail item;

storing the information relating to the location of the mail item at the company server;
and

providing the office worker with access to the company server to obtain the information relating to the location of the mail item.

2. (Original) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the special service indicator is a specific color associated the special service delivery.

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3. (Original) A method as recited in claim 2, wherein at the mail room the specific color is automatically detected and identified to determine the special service delivery required by the mail item.
4. (Original) A method as recited in claim 3, wherein the specific color is selected from a plurality of different colors, each of the plurality of different colors serving as an indicator of a different special service delivery requirement.
5. (Original) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the special service indicator is a label.
6. (Original) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the special service indicator is printed on the mail item.
7. (Original) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the special service indicator is machine readable.
8. (Original) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the information relating to the mail item includes an image of the mail item.
9. (Original) A method as recited in claim 8, wherein the information relating to the location of the mail item further includes date, time, and location data.
10. (Original) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein automatically detecting the special service indicator is accomplished using a mailing machine.
11. (Canceled)
12. (Canceled)
13. (Canceled)

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14. (Canceled)

15. (Canceled)

16. (Canceled)

17. (Canceled)

18. (Canceled)

19. (Canceled)

20. (Canceled)

21. (Canceled)

22. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the mail item is in a receptacle containing other mail items.

23. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in claim 22, wherein the location of the receptacle is determined.

24. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in claim 23, wherein the location of the mail item is determined by knowing the location of the receptacle.

25. (Currently Amended) A method for tracking mail items through a carrier process where the mail item is created by an office worker at a first location, the method comprises the steps of:

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a) applying an indicator to the mail item at the first location wherein the indicator includes requests for tracking information, an electronic address indicator for receiving the tracking information and a mail item serial number that is unique to the office worker;

b) capturing the indicator of the tracking request from the mail item at a second location;

c) applying a first identifier mark to the mail item representing the identifier at the second location;

d) applying a second identifier mark to the mail item at the second location that indicates the time and location where the second identifier mark has been applied to the mail item;

e) placing the mail item into a first receptacle;

f) creating a first receptacle identifier that records a time and location where and when the first receptacle identifier was created;

g) placing the first receptacle into a second receptacle;

h) recording a time and location where the first receptacle identifier has been created;

i) placing the first receptacle into a second receptacle;

j) creating a second receptacle identifier for the mail item;

k) recording a time and location where the second receptacle identifier has been created;

l) creating a record combining the ~~office worker-generated mail item identifier applied at the first location~~, the ~~carrier-generated mail item identifier~~ first identifier mark representing the identifier at the second location, the ~~carrier-generated first receptacle identifier~~, the carrier generated second receptacle identifier and times and locations where and when the first and second carrier generated identifiers has been created; and

n) sending the record to the electronic address.

26. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in claim 25, wherein the mark is near a recipient address block of the mail item.

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27. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in claim 25, wherein the mark is a two dimensional bar code.

28. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in claim 25, wherein a symbol with a vertical dimension equal in size to a recipient address block is near the recipient address block.

29. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in claim 26, wherein a symbol with a horizontal dimension equal in size to a recipient address block is near the recipient address block.